

# TRACKS OF TIME

Monthly Publication from the Zephyrhills Historical Association

Volume 16 - Number 4

April 2014

The next Zephyrhills Historical Association meeting will be held on Tuesday, May  $6^{th}$  at the Zephyrhills Depot Museum, 39110 South Avenue. The business meeting is scheduled for 6 p.m. and the program is at 7 p.m. Refreshments include drinks, which are provided, and food brought in to share by members.

### **Speakers**

Our presentation in April was a display of some of the pictures from our collection by Louie Holt, who has put quite a bit of time and effort into organizing and categorizing the archive for use in a variety of settings. He renamed the photos in our collection, and put them in folders according to the type of picture – Downtown, School, People, Events, etc. He also made the approximate date part of the title, so that the pictures could be sorted that way for presentation. The photos Louie showed at our meeting were basically street scenes from downtown. He had about eighty-five of them. This made for

just the right length of time for the presentation. It was easy for us to see how much work he's put into this project, and we were all impressed. Those in attendance enjoyed his presentation very much, and there was plenty of discussion generated.

Our program for May will be a performance by the Zephyrhills High School Chorus, under the direction of Luan Gore. Those of you who were with us a year ago will remember their presentation last May. We certainly enjoyed ourselves. We'll have pizza and drinks for the students, just like last year, but folks still need to bring in the usual food for our meeting. We hope you'll join us.



### Thursday, May 29th, is our next Ruby Tuesday Scholarship Fundraiser

We are meeting up at 5 p.m. on that day, but you can come anytime. Contact Patty Thompson (813-780-8559 – pattycakeclown1@aol.com) for flyer.

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### ZHA Mission Statement

The mission of the Zephyrhills Historical Association is to research, gather, and share local historical information with all generations, through our literature, programs, and scholarships, and to volunteer assistance to the Zephyrhills Depot Museum and WWII Barracks Museum.

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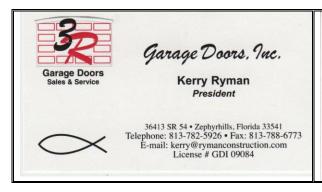
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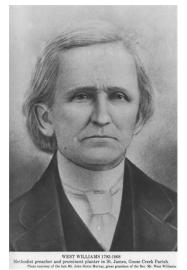




### From the Desk of the Editor

The Prichers of Zephyrhills

Otis Merriwell Pricher (1909-1985) married Damaris Ellene Thompson (1917-1987) in Loughman, Florida on November 1, 1935, and the couple came to here to reside. The reason they chose our fair city was because Ellene's older sister, Vivian, was married to Joe Jones, who at the time was pastor of the First Baptist Church of Zephyrhills. The couple had eloped. Family lore says that the father of the bride would never have approved. That would change in time.



I'm not sure when my dad became a Baptist. Most of my paternal ancestors were Methodist. Quite a few are buried at Cross Swamp Methodist Church Cemetery in Colleton County, South Carolina. My grandmother, Carrie Eugenia Sloman Pricher (1882-1963) was the daughter of a Methodist minister, George Sloman, and my great-grandmother, Ellen Levinia Williams Pricher (1829-1882) was the daughter of another Methodist minister, West Williams (1792-1868). The story is told that my grandparents met in Tampa, rather than in Colleton County, because her father took her along to visit the troops from that county as they prepared to embark for Cuba during the Spanish-American War. My research has revealed that she and my grandfather, William McKindred Pricher (1872-1927) were second cousins once removed, but I doubt that they were even aware of that relationship. At any rate, once my father became a Baptist he took it seriously. He was a deacon of the church for decades.

Both Otis and Ellene were born in Florida. His birth was recorded in Wauchula in Hardee County, and hers was recorded in MacClenny in Baker County. Her paternal ancestors - Thompsons, Rowes, and Tanners - came to Baker County in about 1850, some coming from South Carolina and some from Georgia. Her maternal ancestors – McArthurs, Colemans, Clements, Brinsons, and Scotts – came from Virginia by way of Emanuel County, Georgia. My parents met when my mother came to sing at the church my father was attending, probably shortly after her graduation from Mount Dora High School in 1935. She had a beautiful soprano voice, and she, too, was quite active in the Baptist church all her life.

### 



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Otis went to work for Mr. Krusen shortly after he got to Zephyrhills. He probably started as a lumberman. That was his father's profession. I am not sure of what jobs he did, but I know he left at one point, because the 1940 census shows his profession as retail sales. My aunt tells me that he was working for A & P at the time. At some point he went back to work for Mr. Krusen, who proved to be a tremendous friend. He helped get Otis a job with Florida Power Corporation in 1942, and my dad stayed with them until his retirement in 1972. He truly loved that company, and the company was good to him. Things were a little different in those days, of course. The president of the company would shake my dad's hand and call him by his first name. After my dad had a heart attack in 1957, he mostly worked as a meter-reader, but the



company never reduced his pay from that of a serviceman. A memory that still brings a lump to my throat is of seeing the parked Florida Power trucks, with the servicemen standing outside, hats off, as the funeral procession made its way toward Dade City for my dad's burial.

Otis and Ellene had three children. Charles Norman Pricher was born here in 1936, during the time my dad worked for Mr. Krusen. Sandra Ellene Pricher was born in High Springs in 1943,

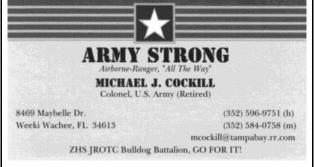


where the Florida Power job had taken the family. About 1947 they came back to Zephyrhills, and I, Jerald Cline Pricher, was born here in 1951. We are all graduates of Zephyrhills High School, as is my daughter, Nicole. Shortly after my parents moved here Mr. Krusen offered them the house that my sister and I reside in today. He'd just had two houses built on 20th Street. My dad told him he couldn't afford it, but Mr. Krusen, being the man he was, said, "Go ahead and move in, Otis, and pay me when you can." My parents eventually paid five thousand dollars for the house.

My mother worked in several places during her lifetime. She once worked for Logan Peeples in his grocery store. She spent some years at the Penny Saver, as both a clerk and a bookkeeper for Clyde Anderson. She worked in the Bank of Zephyrhills, when the McNulty brothers owned it. I remember clearly the night they were killed on 54 at the railroad crossing and how upset she was. She had just seen them at a meeting a few hours before. She later worked at the A & P, where she was when I returned to town in 1978. Sometime in the early eighties she went to work at First Union Bank and was still employed there when she died suddenly of a pulmonary embolism in 1987 at age sixty-nine.







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My dad was a Mason, and he and mother were both very active in the Order of the Eastern Star. They made a great many friends there, including Clereen Morrill Brunty's parents, Clyde and Vera Morrill. Otis was also an advisor to the Rainbow Girls, and several of my early female students spoke of how much they loved him. This, along with their church activities, pretty much WAS the social life of my parents. I treasure the memories of all those people from among my parents' friends who influenced me in my youth. We used to vacation at Lake Weir for two weeks each summer, quite often with the Murphy family, Pat, Jean, Alan, and Lynn. Fishing was generally pretty good, and we had some glorious times there. Zephyrhills was a wonderful place to grow up.



My brother Norm was a freshman in high school when I was born. While at ZHS he was a standout in many ways. He played trumpet in the band, under the direction of the legendary John T. V. Clark. He was a terrific athlete in football and baseball, playing both under our also legendary coach. John Clements. He served on the Student Council all four years of high school, was Junior Class President and Senior Class Vice President, was in the Junior Class play, and was an officer in Future Farmers of America.

He went directly to Stetson University after graduating in 1954. He and George Neukom started together, although it would be ten years before Norm actually graduated. He jokes that he got a notice from Stetson six months after graduation that he was OFF academic probation. I think it's just a story he likes to tell. I don't believe it myself. The reason it took my brother so long to finish his college degree has more to do with finances than anything else. Stetson is a private school and somewhat expensive. My brother worked his way through and also spent four years in the Army during these years. His training as a trumpet player came in quite handy as he played in the band. No shots were fired! He graduated from Stetson in 1963 with a degree in Business, and earned his CPA shortly after.

# **CHALET**



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He worked for several firms in Orlando, eventually becoming a partner, and then starting his own firm, Pricher & Company. He was quite active in the Jaycees during his early years in Orlando. He served as Treasurer for the Miss Florida Pageant for years, and then became President. He married Kay Wever in 1966, and they have two children, John Otis and Kari Virginia, and now two grandchildren, Marlee and Cole. Norm and Kay are both retired now and do some traveling in addition to serving as devoted grandparents.

My sister Sandy was eight years old when I was born. During my early years in elementary school she was still in high school, and since grades one through twelve were all located in the same place during those years she looked after me. She was active at Zephyrhills High School. I remember going to see her act in both the Junior and Senior Class plays and of seeing her picture next to the "School Days" article in the Zephyrhills News. She also worked at Frances' Gift Shop downtown. She would one day have a gift shop of her very own!



After graduating in 1961 she went to Lakeland Business Institute, graduating in 1963. She worked as a legal secretary in Lakeland until 1965 when she moved to Cocoa Beach to work for Hughes Aircraft as part of the team at NASA in the Surveyor Project, which placed the first unmanned spacecraft on the moon. She moved to Atlanta in 1967 to work at Georgia Tech. Sandy returned to Orlando in 1973 and took a job as Vice President of Shareholder Relations and Corporate Secretary with Sun Banks, Inc. One of her responsibilities there was producing the Annual Report to Shareholders. She returned to Atlanta after Sun Banks became Sun Trust. She took early retirement in 1986 to return to Zephyrhills and open her own gift shop. That venture went quite well at her first location, in the old Tribune Building on 8th Street, but after the move out to Mission Square it got much tougher to turn a profit.

She went to work at East Pasco Medical Center, which would become Florida Hospital Zephyrhills, in 1987 as staffing coordinator. She held several other positions there before retiring in 2007. Since retiring she has been active in PEO, with the 2010 Centennial Committee, and with the ZHS Boosters Club. She currently volunteers with the football team, and is sometimes referred to as "Fairy Dog Mother." She claims it's the best job she's ever had.

I live, along with my sister, in the same house where I grew up. There's something very special about that. The spirit of our parents still permeates this place, and I'm reminded of countless hours of childhood spent roaming this very neighborhood with my friends at the time — Doug Prowant, Joey Ahrens, Jim Burns, and Doug Kirk. It was a happy time, and we all felt safe. I attended Ms. Grangers' Kindergarten and spent twelve years of schooling at the location where I would eventually work for thirty-two years as a teacher. I played golf for Bill Kustes, football for John Clements, and ran track for Jim Davis, who would also become my boss when I became a teacher. I played in the band, as my brother had, and held offices in the Student Council — Treasure, Vice President, and President. I was voted "Most Ambitious" my senior year, but I assure you my ambition would never have included teaching as a profession!



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After graduation from ZHS in 1969 I went to Stetson University, as Norm did, partly because I was studying to become a Baptist minister and partly because my maternal grandfather, James Monroe Thompson (1886-1971), provided me a place to live, as he had my brother. I received a BA in Religion in 1973, but decided against going into the ministry. Looking back on it now it was certainly a wise decision. I would have been an awful minister! I worked for Brunswick Corporation in Deland for a year after graduation in their metal fibers plant, and then landed a job with Pizza Hut in Orlando, where I managed three different units over the next four years. During this time, the mid seventies, all three of the Pricher children were living in the Orlando area. In point of fact I lived with my sister off-and-on, in four different locations. She was STILL looking after me!

I happened to run into Jim Davis, my former track coach, at church, when I was considering leaving the restaurant business, and he encouraged me to consider coming to work for him. I had a minor in English at Stetson, but he was not in need of an English teacher. What he needed was a math teacher, so I took some additional college classes over the next few months and came to work for him at Zephyrhills Junior High in 1978. I had dreams of becoming a writer in those days, and I told myself that teaching would give me plenty of time to pursue that goal. How many teachers have thought of the free time they would have when they entered the profession? It never happens.

Teaching captures those of us who were meant to be there. Once you decide you love the kids you want to be involved in everything you can to help them. Jim had already told me I was going to be the track coach, and I did that for twenty-five years. He hadn't told me that I would throw myself into coaching football as well, and then to officiating football and basketball for close to twenty years. He had not warned me of all the dances, games, concerts, and field trips I would go to in support of the kids. Free time just never did come around, but I have no regrets! I retired from teaching in 2010, so I finally have the free time I thought I was going to have, but I also have a host of great memories of wonderful students (and their kids) across the decades.



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**Editor's Note:** Both these articles are by **Jon Ferguson**. He suggested I publish them together, since the wives were sisters. He sends articles on a pretty regular basis, and I include them as space permits. His help is greatly appreciated. I welcome articles from any of you who wish to contribute. Your recollections are interesting to the rest of us. If you hesitate because you don't feel confident of your writing ability, Clereen and I stand ready to "flower it up" a little bit if you request it. Please consider it.

### Cecil George McGavern

We all need a role model. The scary thing about this is: we are role models. Think about that. If I were to be asked to identify a family during my youth that was a perfect role model, the Cecil McGavern family would be among the top ten in Zephyrhills. We all knew them with their business connections, first a paint shop, later appliance sales, etc., and he was a minister. I never heard a disparaging remark about any member of the family. They were honest, hardworking, friendly, God-fearing folks who lived by the laws of the land and their religious convictions. But, would you like to know more about their family history?

Cecil George McGavern was born on February 3, 1910 in South Dakota. He married Jolanda (aka Joan or Jean) Giovenelli in 1933 in Pasco County, Florida. Joan was born in Switzerland on November 29, 1911. She immigrated with Maria (mother? and Gina (sister?) via Italy in 1913 from Le Havre to NY, NY on the ship "France". They were parents of Esther Jean McGavern, Cecil George McGavern, Jr. and William E. "Billy" McGavern. It is interesting to note that Joan signed a Petition for Naturalization on September 6, 1913, but never signed the Oath of Allegiance until December 15, 1942. Cecil George McGavern, Sr. died October 27, 1995 and is buried in Oakside Cemetery, Zephyrhills. His marker is a double marker with Joan's name and birth year engraved on it, but no death date. She died in Largo, Pinellas County, Florida on May 25, 2003.

The parents of Cecil George McGavern were Charles Sidney McGavery and Ella Jessie Marble McGavern. Charles S. McGavern was born in Iowa on May 23, 1880. Ella Jessie Marble was born in Nebraska. They married on June 6, 1906 in Hanson County, South Dakota. They were farmers. They were parents of three: Samuel C. McGavern, Cecil G. McGavern and Esther McGavern. In 1910 they lived in Edgerton, Hanson County, South Dakota. He registered for the WW War I Draft on September 12, 1918. In 1920 they lived in Mitchell, Davison County, South Dakota, but in 1930 we find them in Zephyrhills, Pasco County, Florida. Charles S. McGavern was a Judge and a barber. If I'm not mistaken, his barbershop was next-door to the theater. Judge McGavern died in 1948 and is buried in Oakside Cemetery, Zephyrhills. Ella Jessie McGavern died in 1942 and is also buried in Oakside Cemetery.

The mother of Charles S. McGavern was Thierzah Jane McCoy McGavern. Thierzah Jane McCoy was born in 1850 in Michigan and died in 1938 while staying with her son in 1930 at their home in Zephyrhills. She is buried in Oakside Cemetery, Zephyrhills. The father of Charles S. McGavern was George McGavern, born in Ohio in about 1847. Charles S. McGavern married Thierzah Jane McCoy in 1870. This family lived in Iowa until about 1920 when we find them in South Dakota. George McGavern died in 1921 in Mitchell, Davison County, South Dakota and is buried in Graceland Cemetery there.

### **Edward C. Sellars**

Edward C. Sellars was born on December 5, 1908 in Obion, Tennessee. His parents were Bruce W. and Fanny Sellars. He married Gina (Jean) Giovanelli in 1933 in Pasco County, Florida. Jean was born in Poreta, Italy, on May 17, 1913. She immigrated with her mother, Maria, and sister, Jolanda (Joan, who married Cecil McGavern), on the ship "France" which arrived in New York, New York on September 6, 1913 from LeHavre. Jean was only 4 months old. She was not naturalized until December 15, 1942.

Edward had several siblings including: Joe Sellars, Fletcher Sellars, James Sellars and Frank Sellars. The parents, grandparents and all the children were born in Tennessee.

Edward and Jean Sellars were parents of two: Neva Jean Sellars and Louis Edward Sellars. In 1935 Edward was working as a grocery clerk. In 1940 he was a salesman in a commissary.

This family lived a quiet, peaceful life and was a friend to all. Hurrah for folks like them. Edward died in October 1985. Jean died on February 20, 1968 and is buried in Oakside Cemetery, Zephyrhills.

